Adversus Judaeos
Or: Against the Jews

Saint John Chrysostom

Autumn 386 C.E.

Homily 1

Today I had intended to complete my discussion on the topic on which I spoke to you a few days ago; I wished to present you with even clearer proof that God's nature is more than our minds can graspe. Last Sunday I spoke on this at great length and I brought forward as my witnesses Isaiah, David, and Paul. For it was Isaiah who exclaimed: "Who shall declare his generation?" David knew God was beyond his comprehension and so he gave thanks to him and said: "I will praise you for you are fearfully magnified: wonderful are your works". And again it was David who said: "The knowledge of you is to wonderful for me, a height to which my mind cannot attain". Paul did not search and pry into God's very essence, but only into his providence; I should say rather that he looked only on the small portion of divine providence which God had made manifest when he called the gentiles. And Paul saw this small part as a vast and incomprehensible sea when he exclaimed: "O the depth of the riches and of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!"

These three witnesses gave us proof enough, but I was not satisfied with prophets nor did I settle for apostles. I mounted to the heavens and gave you as proof the chorus of angels as they sang: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men". Again, you heard the Seraphim as they shuddered and cried out in astonishment:

"Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God of hosts, all the earth is filled with his glory". And I gave you also the cherubim who exclaimed: "Blessed be his glory in his dwelling".

So there were three witnesses on earth and three in Heaven who made it clear that God's glory cannot be approached. For the rest, the proof was beyond dispute; there was great applause, the audience warmed with enthusiasm, you assembly came aflame. I did rejoice at this, yet my joy was not because praise was coming to me but because glory was coming to my Master. For that applause and praise showed the love you have for God in your souls. If a servant loves his master and hears someone speak in praise of that master, his heart comes aflame with a love for him who speaks. This is because the servant loves his master. You acted just

that way when I spoke: by the abundance of your applause you showed clearly your abundant love for the Master.

And so I wanted again today to engage in that contest. For if the enemies of the truth never have enough of blaspheming our Benefactor, we must be all the more tireless in praising the God of all. But what am I to do? Another very serious illness calls for any cure my words can bring, an illness which has become implanted in the body of the Church. We must first root this ailment out and then take thought for matters outside; we must first cure our own and then be concerned for others who are strangers.

What is this disease? The festivals of the pitiful and miserable Jews are soon to march upon us one after the other and in quick succession: the feast of Trumpets, the feast of Tabernacles, the fasts. There are many in our ranks who say they think as we do. Yet some of these are going to watch the festivals and others will join the Jews in keeping their feasts and observing their fasts. I wish to drive this perverse custom from the Church right now. My homilies against the Anomians can be put off to another time, and the postponement would cause no harm. But now that the Jewish festivals are close by and at the very door, if I should fail to cure those who are sick with the Judaizing disease. I am afraid that, because of their ill-suited association and deep ignorance, some Christians may partake in the Jews' transgressions; once they have done so, I fear my homilies on these transgressions will be in vain. For if they hear no word from me today, they will then join the Jews in their fasts; once they have committed this sin it will be useless for me to apply the remedy.

And so it is that I hasten to anticipate this danger and prevent it. This is what physicians do. They first check the diseases which are most urgent and acute. But the danger from this sickness is very closely related to the danger from the other; since the Anomians impiety is akin to that of the Jews, my present conflict is akin to my former one. And there is a kingship because the Jews and the Anomians make the same accusation. And what charges do the Jews make? That He called God His own Father and so made Himself equal to God. The Anomians also make this charge-I should not say they make this a charge; they even blot out the phrase "equal to God" and what it connotes, by their resolve to reject it even if they do not physically erase it.

But do not be surprised that I called the Jews pitiable. They really are pitiable and miserable. When so many blessings from heaven came into their hands, they thrust them aside and were at great pains to reject them. The morning Sun of Justice arose for them, but they thrust aside its rays and still sit in darkness. We, who were nurtured by darkness, drew the light to ourselves and were freed from the gloom of their error. They were the branches of that holy root, but those branches were broken. We had no share in the root, but we did reap the fruit of godliness. From

their childhood they read the prophets, but they crucified him whom the prophets had foretold. We did not hear the divine prophecies but we did worship him of whom they prophesied. And so they are pitiful because they rejected the blessings which were sent to them, while others seized hold of these blessing and drew them to themselves. Although those Jews had been called to the adoption of sons, they fell to kinship with dogs; we who were dogs received the strength, through God's grace, to put aside the irrational nature which was ours and to rise to the honor of sons. How do I prove this? Christ said: "It is no fair to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs". Christ was speaking to the Canaanite woman when He called the Jews children and the Gentiles dogs.

But see how thereafter the order was changed about: they became dogs, and we became the children. Paul said of the Jews: "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the mutilation. For we are the circumcision". Do you see how those who at first were children became dogs? Do you wish to find out how we, who at first were dogs, became children? "But to as many as received him, he gave the power of becoming sons of God".

Nothing is more miserable than those people who never failed to attack their own salvation. When there was need to observe the Law, they trampled it under foot. Now that the Law has ceased to bind, they obstinately strive to observe it. What could be more pitiable that those who provoke God not only by transgressing the Law but also by keeping it? On this account Stephen said: "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, you always resist the Holy Spirit", not only by transgressing the Law but also by wishing to observe it at the wrong time.

Stephen was right in calling them stiff-necked. For they failed to take up the yoke of Christ, although it was sweet and had nothing about it which was either burdensome or oppressive. For he said: "Learn from me for I am meek and humble of heart", and "Take my yoke upon you, for my yoke is sweet and my burden light". Nonetheless they failed to take up the yoke because of the stiffness of their necks. Not only did they fail to take it up but they broke it and destroyed it. For Jeremiah said: "Long ago you broke your yoke and burst your bonds". It was not Paul who said this but the voice of the prophet speaking loud and clear. When he spoke of the yoke and the bonds, he meant the symbols of rule, because the Jews rejected the rule of Christ when they said: "We have no king but Caesar". You Jews broke the yoke, you burst the bonds, you cast yourselves out of the kingdom of heaven, and you made yourselves subject to the rule of men. Please consider with me how accurately the prophet hinted that their hearts were uncontrolled. He did not say: "You set aside the yoke", but "You broke the yoke" and this is the crime of untamed beasts, who are uncontrolled and reject rule.

But what is the source of this hardness? It come from gluttony and drunkenness. Who say so? Moses himself. "Israel ate and was filled and the darling grew

fat and frisky". When brute animals feed from a full manger, they grow plump and become more obstinate and hard to hold in check; they endure neither the yoke, the reins, nor the hand of the charioteer. Just so the Jewish people were driven by their drunkenness and plumpness to the ultimate evil; they kicked about, they failed to accept the yoke of Christ, nor did they pull the plow of his teaching. Another prophet hinted at this when he said: "Israel is as obstinate as a stubborn heifer". And still another called the Jews "an untamed calf".

Although such beasts are unfit for work, they are fit for killing. And this is what happened to the Jews: while they were making themselves unfit for work, they grew fit for slaughter. This is why Christ said: "But as for these my enemies, who did not want me to be king over them, bring them here and slay them". You Jews should have fasted then, when drunkenness was doing those terrible things to you, when your gluttony was giving birth to your ungodliness-not now. Now your fasting is untimely and an abomination. Who said so? Isaiah himself when he called out in a loud voice: "I did not choose this fast, say the Lord". Why? "You quarrel and squabble when you fast and strike those subject to you with your fists". But if you fasting was an abomination when you were striking your fellow slaves, does it become acceptable now that you have slain your Master? How could that be right?

The man who fast should be properly restrained, contrite, humbled-not drunk with anger. But do you strike your fellow slaves? In Isaiah's day they quarreled and squabbled when they fasted; now when fast, they go in for excesses and the ultimate licentiousness, dancing with bare feet in the marketplace. The pretext is that they are fasting, but they act like men who are drunk. Hear how the prophet bit them to fast. "Sanctify a fast", he said. He did not say: "Make a parade of your fasting", but "call an assembly; gather together the ancients". But these Jews are gathering choruses of effeminates and a great rubbish heap of harlots; they drag into the synagogue the whole theater, actors and all. For there is no difference between the theater and the synagogue. I know that some suspect me of rashness because I said there is no difference between the theater and the synagogue; but I suspect them of rashness if they do not think that this is so. If my declaration that the two are the same rests on my own authority, then charge me with rashness. But if the words I speak are the words of the prophet, then accept his decision.

Many, I know, respect the Jews and think that their present way of life is a venerable one. This is why I hasten to uproot and tear out this deadly opinion. I said that the synagogue is no better than a theater and I bring forward a prophet as my witness. Surely the Jews are not more deserving of belief than their prophets. "You had a harlot's brow; you became shameless before all". Where a harlot has set herself up, that place is a brothel. But the synagogue is not only a brothel and a theater; it also is a den of robbers and a lodging for wild beasts. Jeremiah said:

"Your house has become for me the den of a hyena". He does not simply say "of wild beast", but "of a filthy wild beast", and again: "I have abandoned my house, I have cast off my inheritance". But when God forsakes a people, what hope of salvation is left? When God forsakes a place, that place becomes the dwelling of demons.

But at any rate the Jews say that they, too, adore God. God forbid that I say that. No Jew adores God! Who say so? The Son of God say so. For he said: "If you were to know my Father, you would also know me. But you neither know me nor do you know my Father". Could I produce a witness more trustworthy than the Son of God?

If, then, the Jews fail to know the Father, if they crucified the Son, if they thrust off the help of the Spirit, who should not make bold to declare plainly that the synagogue is a dwelling of demons? God is not worshipped there. Heaven forbid! From now on it remains a place of idolatry. But still some people pay it honor as a holy place.

Let me tell you this, not from guesswork but from my own experience. Three days ago-believe me, I am not lying-I saw a free woman of good bearing, modest, and a believer. A brutal, unfeeling man, reputed to be a Christian (for I would not call a person who would dare to do such a thing a sincere Christian) was forcing her to enter the shrine of the Hebrews and to swear there an oath about some matters under dispute with him. She came up to me and asked for help; she begged me to prevent this lawless violence-for it was forbidden to her, who had shared in the divine mysteries, to enter that place. I was fired with indignation, I became angry, I rose up, I refused to let her be dragged into that transgression, I snatched her from the hands of her abductor. I asked him if were a Christian, and he said he was. Then I set upon him vigorously, charging him with lack of feeling and the worst stupidity; I told him he was no better off than a mule if he, who professed to worship Christ, would drag someone off to the dens of the Jews who had crucified him. I talked to him a long time, drawing my lesson from the Holy Gospels; I told him first that it was altogether forbidden to swear and that it was wrong to impose the necessity of swearing on anyone. I then told him that he most not subject a baptize believer to this necessity. In fact, he must not force even an unbaptized person to swear an oath.

After I talked with him at great length and had driven the folly of his error from his soul, I asked him why he rejected the Church and dragged the woman to the place where the Hebrews assembled. He answered that many people had told him that oaths sworn there were more to be feared. His words made me groan, then I grew angry, and finally I began to smile. When I saw the devil's wickedness, I groaned because he had the power to seduce men; I grew angry when I considered how careless were those who were deceived; when I saw the extent and depth of

the folly of those who were deceived, I smiled.

I told you this story because you are savage and ruthless in your attitude toward those who do such things and undergo these experiences. If you see one of your brothers falling into such transgressions, you consider that it is someone else's misfortune, not your own; you think you have defended yourselves against your accusers when you say: "What concern of mine is it? What do I have in common with that man"? When you say that, your words manifest the utmost hatred for mankind and a cruelty which benefits the devil. What are you saying? You are a man and share the same nature. Why speak of a common nature when you have but a single head, Christ? Do you dare to say you have nothing in common with your own members? In what sense do you admit that Christ is the head of the Church? For certainly it is the function of the head to join all the limbs together, to order them carefully to each other, and to bind them into one nature. But if you have nothing in common with your members, then you have nothing in common with your brother, nor do you have Christ as your head.

The Jews frighten you as if you were little children, and you do not see it. Many wicked slaves show frightening and ridiculous masks to youngsters-the masks are not frightening by their nature, but they seem so to the children's simple minds-and in this way they stir up many a laugh. This is the way the Jews frighten the simpler-minded Christians with the bugbears and hobgoblins of their shrines. Yet how could their ridiculous and disgraceful synagogues frighten you? Are they not the shrines of men who have been rejected, dishonored, and condemned?

Our churches are not like that; they are truly frightening and filled with fear. God's presence makes a place frightening because he has power over life and death. In our churches we hear countless homilies on eternal punishments, on rivers of fire, on the venomous worm, on bonds that cannot be burst, or exterior darkness. But the Jews neither know nor dream of these things. They live for their bellies, they gape for the things of this world, their condition is not better than that of pigs or goats because of their wanton ways and excessive gluttony. They know but one thing: to fill their bellies and be drunk, to get all cut and bruised, to be hurt and wounded while fighting for their favorite charioteers.

Tell me, then, are their shrines awful and frightening? Who would say so? what reasons do we have for thinking that they are frightening unless someone should tell us that dishonored slaves, who have no right to speak and who have been driven from their Master's home, should frighten us, who have been given honor and the freedom to speak? Certainly this is not the case. Inns are not more august then royal palaces. Indeed the synagogue is less deserving of honor than any inn. It is not merely a lodging place for robbers and cheats but also for demons. This is true not only of the synagogues but also of the souls of the Jews, as I shall try to prove at the end of my homily.

I urge you to keep my words in your minds in a special way. For I am not now speaking for show or applause but to cure your souls. And what else is left for me to say when some of you are still sick although there are so many physicians to effect a cure?

There were twelve apostles and they drew the whole world to themselves. The greater portion of the city is Christian, yet some are still sick with the Judaizing disease. And what could we, who are healthy, say in our own defense? Surely those who are sick deserve to be accused. But we are not free from blame, because we have neglected them in their hour of illness; if we had shown great concern for them and they had the benefit of this care, they could not possibly still be sick.

Let me get the start on you by saying this now, so that each of you may win over his brother. Even if you must impose restraint, even if you must use force, even if you must treat him ill and obstinately, do everything to save him from the devil's snare and to free him from fellowship with those who slew Christ.

Tell me this. Suppose you were to see a man who had been justly condemned being led to execution through the marketplace. Suppose it were in your power to save him from the hands of the public executioner. Would you not do all you could to keep him from being dragged off? But now you see your own brother being dragged off unjustly to the depth of destruction. And it is not the executioner who drags him of, but the devil. Would you be so bold as not to do your part toward rescuing him from his transgression? If you don't help him, what excuse would you find? But your brother is stronger and more powerful than you. Show him to me. If he will stand fast in his obstinate resolve, I shall choose to risk my life rather than let him enter the doors of the synagogue.

I shall say to him: What fellowship do you have with the free Jerusalem, with the Jerusalem above? You chose the one below; be a slave with that earthly Jerusalem which, according to the word of the Apostle, is a slave together with her children. Do you fast with the Jews? Then take off your shoes with the Jews, and walk barefoot in the marketplace, and share with them in their indecency and laughter. But you would not chose to do this because you are ashamed and apt to blush. Are you ashamed to share with them in outward appearance but unashamed to share in their impiety? What excuse will you have, you who are only half a Christian?

Believe me, I shall risk my life before I would neglect any one who is sick with this disease-if I see him. If I fail to see him, surely God will grant me pardon. And let each one of you consider this matter; let him not think it is something of secondary importance. Do you take no notice of what the deacon continuously calls out in the mysteries? "Recognize one another", he says. Do you not see how he entrusts to you the careful examination of your brothers? Do this in the case of Judaizers, too. When you observe someone Judaizing, take hold of him, show him

what he is doing, so that you may not yourself be an accessory to the risk he runs.

If any Roman soldier serving overseas is caught favoring the barbarians and the Persians, not only is he in danger but so also is everyone who was aware of how this felt and failed to make this fact known to the general. Since you are the army of Christ, be overly careful in searching to see if anyone favoring an alien faith has mingled among you, and make his presence know-not so that we may put him to death as those generals did, nor that we may punish him or take our vengeance upon him, but that we may free him from his error and ungodliness and make him entirely our own.

If you are unwilling to do this, if you know of such a person but conceal him, be sure that both you and he will be subject to the same penalty. For Paul subjects to chastisement and punishment not only those who commit acts of wickedness but also those who approve what they have done. The prophet, too, brings to the same judgment not only thieves but also who run with the thieves. And this is quite reasonable. For if a man is aware of a criminal's actions but covers them up and conceals them, he is providing a stronger basis for the criminal to be careless of the law and making him less afraid in his career of crime.

But I must get back again to those who are sick. Consider, then, with whom they are sharing their fasts. It is with those who shouted: "Crucify him, Crucify him", with those who said: "His blood be upon us and upon our children". If some men had been caught in rebellion against their ruler and were condemned, would you have dared to go up to them and to speak with them? I think not. Is it not foolish, then, to show such readiness to flee from those who have sinned against a man, but to enter into fellowship with those who have committed outrages against God himself? Is it not strange that those who worship the Crucified keep common festival with those who crucified him? Is it not a sign of folly and the worst madness?

Since there are some who think of the synagogue as a holy place, I must say a few words to them. Why do you reverence that place? Must you not despise it, hold it in abomination, run away from it? They answer that the Law and the books of the prophets are kept there. What is this? Will any place where these books are be a holy place? By no means! This is the reason above all others why I hate the synagogue and abhor it. They have the prophets but not believe them; they read the sacred writings but reject their witness-and this is a mark of men guilty of the greatest outrage.

Tell me this. If you were to see a venerable man, illustrious and renowned, dragged off into a tavern or den of robbers; if you were to see him outraged, beaten, and subjected there to the worst violence, would you have held that tavern or den in high esteem because that great and esteemed man had been inside it while undergoing that violent treatment? I think not. Rather, for this very reason you would

have hated and abhorred the place.

Let that be your judgment about the synagogue, too. For they brought the books of Moses and the prophets along with them into the synagogue, not to honor them but to outrage them with dishonor. When they say that Moses and the prophets knew not Christ and said nothing about his coming, what greater outrage could they do to those holy men than to accuse them of failing to recognize their Master, than to say that those saintly prophets are partners of their impiety? And so it is that we must hate both them and their synagogue all the more because of their offensive treatment of those holy men.

Why do I speak about the books and the synagogues? In time of persecution, the public executioners lay hold of the bodies of the martyrs, they scourge them, and tear them to pieces. Does it make the executioners' hands holy because they lay hold of the body of holy men? Heaven forbid! The hands which grasped and held the bodies of the holy ones still stay unholy. Why? Because those executioners did a wicked thing when they laid their hands upon the holy. And will those who handle and outrage the writings of the holy ones be any more venerable for this than those who executed the martyrs? Would that not be the ultimate foolishness? If the maltreated bodies of the martyrs do not sanctify those who maltreated them but even add to their blood-guilt, much less could the Scriptures, if read without belief, ever help those who read without believing. The very act of deliberately choosing to maltreat the Scriptures convicts them of greater godlessness.

If they did not have the prophets, they would not deserve such punishment; if they had not read the sacred books, they would not be so unclean and so unholy. But, as it is, they have been stripped of all excuse. They do have the heralds of the truth but, with hostile heart, they set themselves against the prophets and the truth they speak. So it is for this reason that they would be all the more profane and blood-guilty: they have the prophets, but they treat them with hostile hearts.

So it is that I exhort you to flee and shun their gatherings. The harm they bring to our weaker brothers is not slight; they offer no slight excuse to sustain to the folly of the Jews. For when they see that you, who worship the Christ whom they crucified, are reverently following their rituals, how can they fail to think that the rites they have performed are the best and that our ceremonies are worthless? For after you worship and adore at our mysteries, you run to the very men who destroy our rites. Paul said: "If a man sees you that have knowledge sit at meat in the idol's temple, shall not his conscience, being weak, be emboldened to eat those things which are sacrificed to idols"? And let me say: If a man sees you that have knowledge come into the synagogue and participate in the festival of the Trumpets, shall not his conscience, being weak, be emboldened to admire what the Jews do? He who falls not only pays the penalty for his own fall, but he is also punished because he trips others as well. But the man who has stood firm is rewarded not

only because of his own virtue but people admire him for leading others to desire the same things.

Therefore, flee the gatherings and holy places of the Jews. Let no man venerate the synagogue because of the holy books; let him hate and avoid it because the Jews outrage and maltreat the holy ones, because they refuse to believe their words, because they accuse them of the ultimate impiety.

That you may know that the sacred books do not make a place holy but that the purpose of those who frequent a place does make it profane, I shall tell an old story. Ptolemy Philadelphus had collected books from all over the world. When he learned that the Jews had writings which treated of God and the ideal state, he sent for men from Judea and had them translate those books, which he then had deposited in the temple of Serapis, for he was a pagan. Up to the present day the translated books remain there in the temple. But will the temple of Serapis be holy because of the holy books? Heaven forbid! Although the books have their own holiness, they do not give a share of it to the place because those who frequent the place are defiled.

You must apply the same argument to the synagogue. Even if there is no idol there, still demons do inhabit the place. And I say this not only about the synagogue here in town but about the one in Daphne as well; for at Daphne you have a more wicked place of perdition which they call Matrona's. I have heard that many of the faithful go up there and sleep beside the place.

But heaven forbid that I call these people faithful. For to me the shrine of Matrona and the temple of Apollo are equally profane. If anyone charges me with boldness, I will in turn charge him with the utmost madness. For, tell me, is not the dwelling place of demons a place of impiety even if no god's statue stands there? Here the slayers of Christ gather together, here the cross is driven out, here God is blasphemed, here the Father is ignored, here the Son is outraged, here the grace of the Spirit is rejected. Does not greater harm come from this place since the Jews themselves are demons? In the pagan temple the impiety is naked and obvious; it would not be ease to deceive a man of sound and prudent mind or entice him to go there. But in the synagogue there are men who say they worship God and abhor idols, men who say they have prophets and pay them honor. But by their words they make ready an abundance of bait to catch in their nets the simpler souls who are so foolish as to be caught of guard.

So the godlessness of the Jews and the pagans is on a par. But the Jews practice a deceit which is more dangerous. In their synagogue stands an invisible altar of deceit on which they sacrifice not sheep and calves but the souls of men.

Finally, if the ceremonies of the Jews move you to admiration, what do you have in common with us? If the Jewish ceremonies are venerable and great, our are lies. But if ours are true, as they are true, theirs are filled with deceit. I am not

speaking of the Scriptures. Heaven forbid! It was the Scriptures which took me by the hand and led me to Christ. But I am talking about the ungodliness and present madness of the Jews.

Certainly it is the time for me to show that demons dwell in the synagogue, not only in the place itself but also in the souls of the Jews. As Christ said: "When an unclean spirit is gone out, he walks through dry places seeking rest. If he does not find it he says: I shall return to my house. And coming he finds it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter into him and the last state of that man is made worse than the first. So shall it be also to this generations".

Do you see that demons dwell in their souls and that these demons are more dangerous than the ones of old? And this is very reasonable. In the old days the Jews acted impiously toward the prophets; now they outrage the Master of the prophets. Tell me this. Do you not shudder to come into the same place with men possessed, who have so many unclean spirits, who have been reared amid slaughter and bloodshed? Must you share a greeting with them and exchange a bare word? Must you not turn away from them since they are the common disgrace and infection of the whole world? Have they not come to every form of wickedness? Have not all the prophets spent themselves making many and long speeches of accusation against them? What tragedy, what manner of lawlessness have they not eclipsed by their blood-guiltiness? They sacrificed their own sons and daughters to demons. They refused to recognize nature, they forgot the pangs, of birth, they trod underfoot the rearing of their children, they overturned from their foundations the laws of kingship, they became more savage than any wild beast.

Wild beasts oftentimes lay down their lives and scorn their own safety to protect their young. No necessity forced the Jews when they slew their own children with their own hands to pay honor to the avenging demons, the foes of our life. What deed of theirs should strike us with greater astonishment? Their ungodliness or their cruelty or their inhumanity? That they sacrificed their children or that they sacrificed them to demons? Because of their licentiousness, did they not show a lust beyond that of irrational animals? Hear what the prophet says of their excesses. "They are become as amorous stallions. Every one neighed after his neighbor's wife". He did not say: "Everyone lusted after his neighbor's wife", but he expressed the madness which came from their licentiousness with the greatest clarity by speaking of it as the neighing of brute beasts.

What else do you wish me to tell you? Shall I tell you of their plundering, their covetousness, their abandonment of the poor, their thefts, their cheating in trade? the whole day long will not be enough to give you an account of these things. But do their festivals have something solemn and great about them? They have shown that these, too, are impure. Listen to the prophets; rather, listen to God and with

how strong a statement he turns his back on them: "I have found your festivals hateful, I have thrust them away from myself".

Does God hate their festivals and do you share in them? He did not say this or that festival, but all of them together. Do you wish to see that God hates the worship paid with kettledrums, with lyres, with harps, and other instruments? God said: "Take away from me the sound of your songs and I will not hear the canticle of you harps". If God said: "Take them away from me", do you run to listen to the trumpets? Are these sacrifices and offerings not an abomination? "If you bring me the finest wheaten flour, it is in vain: incense is an abomination to me". The incense is an abomination. Is not the place also an abomination? Before they committed the crime of crimes, before they killed their Master, before the cross, before the slaying of Christ, it was an abomination. Is it not now all the more an abomination? And yet what is more fragrant than incense? But God looks not to the nature of the gifts but to the intention of those who bring them; it is this intention that he judges their offerings.

He paid heed to Abel and then to his gifts. He looked at Cain and then turned away from his offering. For Scripture says: "For Cain and his offerings he had no regard". Noah offered to God sacrifices of sheep and calves and birds. The Scripture say: "And the Lord smelled a sweet odor", that is, he accepted the offerings. For God has no nostrils but is a bodiless spirit. Yet what is carried up from the altar is the odor and smoke from burning bodies, and nothing is more malodorous than such a savor. But that you may learn that God attends to the intention of the one offering the sacrifice and then accepts or rejects it, Scripture calls the odor and the smoke a sweet savor; but it calls the incense an abomination because the intention of those offering it reeked with a great stench.

Do you wish to learn that, together with the sacrifices and the musical instruments and the festivals and the incense, God also rejects the temple because of those who enter it? He showed this mostly by his deeds, when he gave it over to barbarian hands, and later when he utterly destroyed it. But even before its destruction, through his prophet he shouted aloud and said: "Put not your trust in deceitful words for it will not help you when you say: "This is the temple of the Lord! The temple of the Lord"! What the prophet says is that the temple does not make holy those who gather there, but those who gather there make the temple holy. If the temple did not help at a time when the Cherubim and the Ark were there, much less will it help now that all those things are gone, now that God's rejection is complete, now that there is greater ground for enmity. How great an act of madness and derangement would it be to take as your partners in the festivals those who have been dishonored, those whom God has forsaken, those who angered the Master?

Tell me this. If a man were to have slain your son, would you endure to look upon him, or accept his greeting? Would you not shun him as a wicked demon,

as the devil himself? They slew the Son of your Lord; do you have the boldness to enter with them under the same roof? After he was slain he heaped such honor upon you that he made you his brother and coheir. But you dishonor him so much that you pay honor to those who slew him on the cross, that you observe with them the fellowship of the festivals, that you go to their profane places, enter their unclean doors, and share in the tables of demons. For I am persuaded to call the fasting of the Jews a table of demons because they slew God. If the Jews are acting against God, must they not be serving the demons? Are you looking for demons to cure you? When Christ allowed the demons to enter into the swine, straightway they plunged into the sea. Will these demons spare the bodies of men? I wish they would not kill men's bodies, that they would not plot against them. But they will. The demons cast men from Paradise and deprived them the honor from above. Will they cure their bodies? That is ridiculous, mere stories. The demons know how to plot and do harm, not to cure. They do not spare souls. Tell me, then, will they spare bodies? They try to drive men from the Kingdom. Will they choose to free them from disease?

Did you not hear what the prophet said? Rather, did you hear what God said through the prophet? He said that the demons can do neither good nor evil. Even if they could cure and wanted to do so-which is impossible-you must not take an indestructible and unending punishment in exchange for a slight benefit which can soon be destroyed. Will you cure your body and destroy your soul? You are making a poor exchange. Are you angering God who made your body, and are you calling to your aid the demon who plots against you?

If any demon-fearing pagan has medical knowledge, will he also find it easy to win you over to worship the pagan gods? Those pagans, too, have their skill. They, too, have often cured many diseases and brought the sick back to health. Are we going to share in their godlessness on this account? Heaven forbid! Hear what Moses said to the Jews. "If there arise in the midst of you a prophet or one that says he has dreamed a dream and he foretell a sign and a wonder, and that sign or wonder which he spoke come to pass, and he say to you: "Let us go and serve strange gods whom our fathers did not know, you shall not hear the words of that prophet or dreamer".

What Moses means is this. If some prophet rises up, he says, and performs a sign, by either raising a dead man or cleansing a leper, or curing a maimed man, and after working the wonder calls you to impiety, do not heed him just because his sign comes to pass. Why? "The Lord your God is trying you to see whether you love him with all your heart and all your soul". From this it is clear that demons do not cure. If ever God should permit demons to cure, as he might permit a man to do, his permission is given to test you-not because God does not know what you are, but that he may teach you to reject even the demons who do cure.

And why do I speak of bodily cures? If any man threatens you with Gehenna unless you deny Christ, do not heed his words. If someone should promise you a kingdom to revolt from the only-begotten Son of God, turn away from him and hate him. Be a disciple of Paul and emulate those words which his blessed and noble soul exclaimed when he said: "I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, no height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ our Lord".

No angels, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other creature separated Paul from the love of Christ. Do you revolt to cure your body? And what excuse could we find? Certainly we must fear Christ more than Gehenna and desire him more than a kingdom. Even if we be sick, it is better to remain in ill health than to fall into impiety for the sake of a cure; for even if a demon cures you, he has hurt more than he has helped. He has helped the body, which a short time later will altogether die and rot away. But he has hurt the soul, which will never die. Kidnappers often entice little boys by offering them sweets, and cakes, and marbles, and other such things; then they deprive them of their freedom and their very life. So, too, the demons promise cure of a limb and then dash the whole salvation of the soul into the sea.

Beloved, let us not put up with that; in every way let us seek to keep ourselves free from godlessness. Could Job not have heeded his wife, blasphemed against God, and been free from the disaster which beset him? "Curse God and die" she said. But he chose to suffer the pain and to waste away; he chose to endure that unbearable blow rather to blaspheme and be free from the evils which beset him. You must emulate him. If the demon shall promise you ten thousand cures from the ills which beset you, do not heed him, do not put up with him-just as Job refused to heed his wife. Chose to endure your illness rather than destroy your faith and the salvation of your soul. God does not forsake you. It is because he wishes to increase your glory that oftentimes he permits you to fall sick. Keep up your courage so that you may also hear him say: "Do you think I have dealt with you otherwise than that you may be shown to be just"?

I could have said more than this, but to keep you from forgetting what I have said, I shall bring my homily to an end here with the words of Moses: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you". If any of you, whether you are here present or not, shall go to the spectacle of the Trumpets, or rush off to the synagogue, or go up to the shrine of Matrona, or take part in fasting, or share in the Sabbath, or observe any other Jewish ritual great or small, I call heaven and earth as my witnesses that I am guiltless of the blood of all of you.

These words will stand by your side and mine on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you heed them, they will bring you great confidence; if you heed them

not or conceal anyone who dares to do those things, my words shall stand against you as bitter accusations. "For I have not shrunk from declaring to you the whole counsel of God".

I have deposited the money with the bankers. It remains for you to increase the deposit and to use the profit from my words for the salvation of your brothers. Do you find it an oppressive burden to denounce those who commit these sins? It is an oppressive burden to remain silent. For this silence makes you an enemy to God and brings destruction both to you who conceal such sinners and to those whose sins go unrevealed. How much better it is to become hateful to our fellow servants for saving them to provoke God's anger against yourselves. Even if your fellow servant be vexed with you now, he will not be able to harm you but will be grateful later on for his cure. But if you seek to win your fellow servant's favor, if you remain silent and hurt him by concealing his sin, God will exact from you the ultimate penalty. Your silence will make God your foe and will hurt your brother; if you denounce him and reveal his sin, you will make God propitious and benefit your brother and you will gain as a friend one who was crazed but who learned from experience that you served him well.

Do not think, then, that you are doing your brothers a favor if you should see them pursuing some absurdity and should fail to accuse them with all zeal. If you lose a cloak, do you not consider as your foe not only the one who stole it but also the man who knew of the theft and refused to denounce the thief? Our common Mother (the Church) has lost not a cloak but a brother. The devil stole him and now holds him in Judaism. You know who stole him; you know him who was stolen. Do you see me lighting, as it were, the lamp of my instruction and searching everywhere in my grief? And do you stand silent, refusing to denounce him? What excuse will you have? Will the Church not reckon you among her worst enemies? Will she not consider you a foe and destroyer?

Heaven forbid that anyone who hears my words of advice should commit such a sin as to betray the brother for whom Christ died. Christ poured out his blood on his account. Are you too reluctant to utter a word on this account? I urge you not to be so reluctant. Right after you leave here, stir yourselves to the chase and let each of you bring me one of those suffering from this disease.

But heaven forbid that so many be sick with it. Let two or three, or ten or twenty of you bring me one man. One the day you do and when I see in your nets the game you have caught, I will set before you a more plentiful table. If I see that the advice I gave today has been put to work, I shall be more zealous in undertaking the cure of those men, and this will be a greater boon both for you and them.

Do not regard my words lightly. Be scrupulous in hunting out those who suffer from this sickness. Let the women search for the women, the men for the men, the slaves for the slaves, the freemen for the freemen, and the children for the

children. Come all of you to our next meeting with such success that you win praise from me-and, before any praise of mine, that you obtain, from God a great and indescribable reward which in abundant measure surpasses the labors of those who succeed. May all of us obtain this by the grace and loving-kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and with whom be glory to the Father together with the Holy Spirit now and forever, world without end. Amen.